Youth /

THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL BOOK I'VE READ
BEATLE-HATERS DON'T ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS
I WAS IN GHANA WHEN NKRUMAH FELL

SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

MY FIVE DAYS IN GHANA

BY ED ECKSTEIN / When I arrived in Ghana early on that Sunday eveni in February, my plane was 24 hours late and no one was at the airport t meet me. This was my first trip overseas. I knew no one in Accra, r even the name of a hotel. I was tired from three weeks of intensive wo in the hot climate of Liberia where I had been on a photographic assig ment for the Lutheran Church. And now I was to be in Ghana for five da to cover a story for YOUTH magazine. I had been told that the Ghanai people were unfriendly, but a photographer whom I met on the pla

All photos by Ed Eckstein

ATION STRIVES TO GROW...

elped me through customs, got some of my U.S. dollars changed into hanaian currency, and recommended a reasonable hotel. And my per-nal luck and the Ghanaian hospitality continued, for the hotel had one oom left and dinner was still being served—British style from 7:30 to 9!

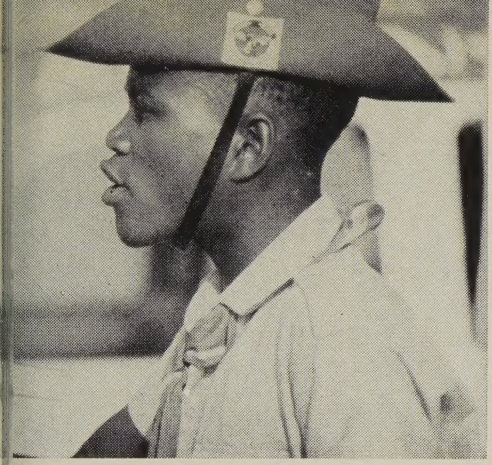
At 6:30 a.m. on Monday morning, a knock on the door announced ıy "morning tea" was being brought to me—British style, too!

In the meantime, I had made contact with Mr. Kadwo Ankarah, the di-ector of the Christian Service Committee of the Christian Council of

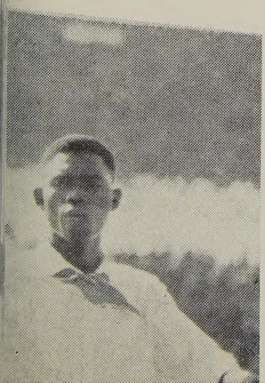
Ghana. It seems that he had come to the airport last night and had missed me by minutes. To my disappointment, I learned that the school which I had come to photograph was not in session now. But Mr. Ankarah told me that I was very lucky, because this very afternoon there was to be a big youth parade held annually in Accra.

At the parade I was the only "outside" photographer. The local and government cameramen were very friendly and interested in my equipment. The parade was held in Black Star Square—a large parade ground with a stadium and a small reviewing stand. Youth from all over Ghana took part. For five hours it lasted, interrupted occasionally by speeches. First came the motorcycles, then hundreds of uniformed youth —representing everything from Boy Scouts to

For five hours the students march



d the leaders spoke



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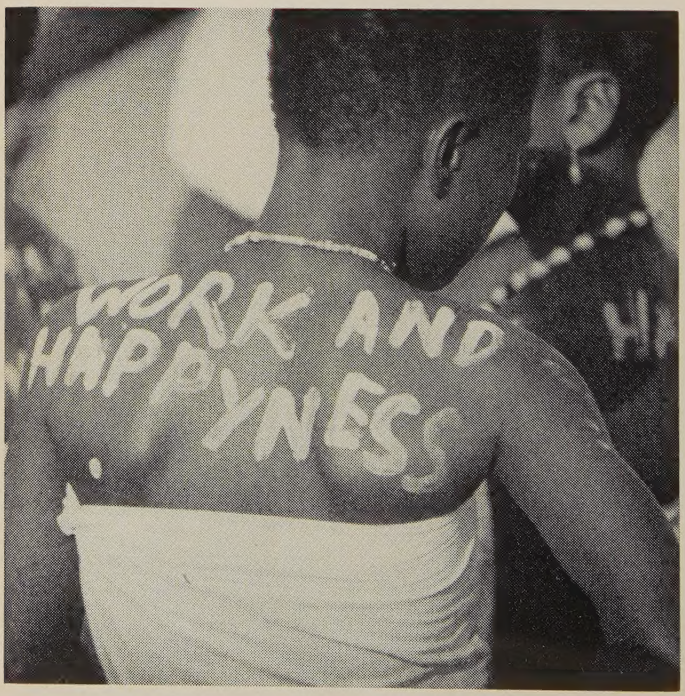
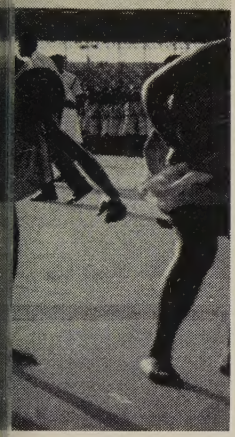
Cover Photos by Ed Eckstein.

Few youth are as politically-minded





ana youth

the Young Pioneers (with Nkrumah's picture on their shirts). Many carried signs supporting Ghana and African unity. At the end of the parade some gymnasts performed and a group of girls danced folk dances.

On Tuesday I met Fritz Pawelzik, a German who works with the YMCA. He introduced me to some of the students at the modern University of Ghana.

The major difference between Ghanaian youth, said Mr. Pawelzik, and youth in other countries of Africa, as well as of Europe and of America, is that Ghanaian youth are much more politically-minded, and they are very much Africa-minded. They ardently discuss Rhodesia and South Africa, and they all want and dream of African unity. At the same time, these youth are often disappointed that persons in responsible positions within their government do not always live up to the standards they have set. Youth here, he said, are very optimistic about the future, for they

African unity is a big dre

now that since this is a young nation there re all kinds of possibilities for personal advancement. But, Mr. Pawelzik was pessimistic, ecause so many young people are more interested in white-collar work than in technical bs. And yet the need for technological expertise is also vital to a growing young nation.

One of the students I talked with was Joe krumah (no relation), who is president of he university YMCA and a second-year student in political science at the university. He isited in Europe last year. "Here in Ghana," e said, "education is compulsory. At the age f six, a child enters primary school which he ttends for six years. Then he enters a middle chool for four years, from which he can go on

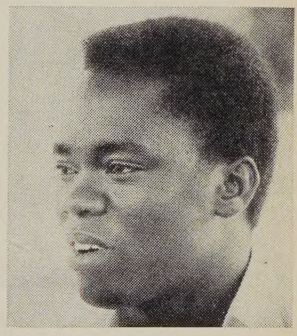
n many young people

a secondary school. The number of years ent in secondary school can be two, three, r four, depending on how long it takes him to ass the necessary exams. But an average hanaian student is 21 when he enters Univerty. The government gives scholarships to all udents in the university—including money r books—which is a big help to students om poor families. Illiteracy used to be a roblem here, but the government is trying ard to eliminate it."

Another student, Rebecca Ellimah, said, The main problem for education in Ghana is ie country school, where most people stop ieir education at the end of the elementary ears. Some then join other institutions like ie Workers' Brigade. If the person is a omen, she will probably go to a vocational aining school to learn to sew and cook, and ien will do housework and laundry."

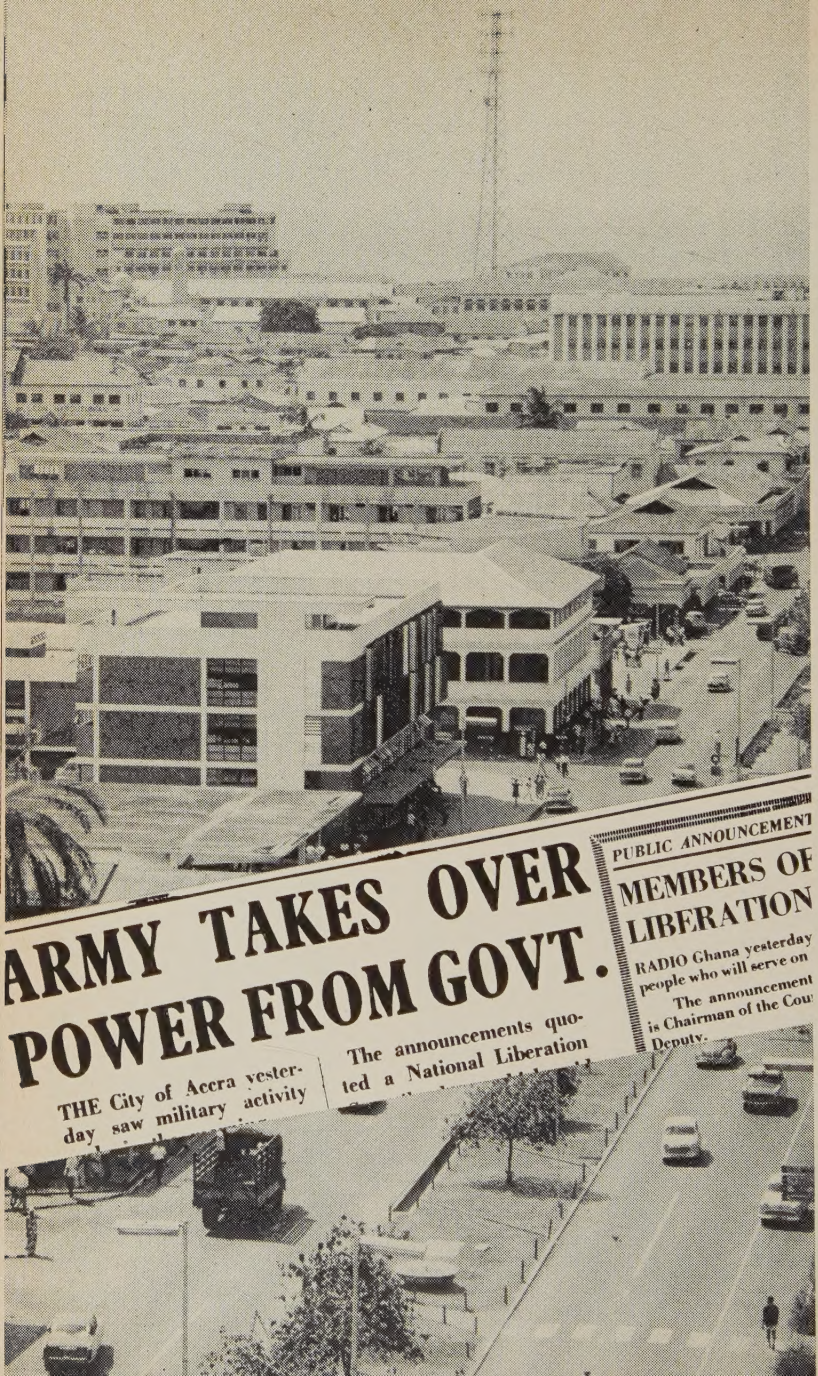
Among the girls at the University, the most ressing problem is they're not working as ard as the men, says Miss Ellimah. "I just an't understand why. Perhaps it's our nature. hanaian women prefer to linger behind the ien and most of the time the girls stay in their

Rebecca Ellimah



Joe Nkrumah

Winfred Achant



ARMY TAKES OVER POWER FROM GOVT.

THE City of Accra yesterday saw military activity

The announcements quoted a National Liberation

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

MEMBERS OF LIBERATION

RADIO Ghana yesterday people who will serve on

The announcement is Chairman of the Cou Deputy.

king photos, unaware of the coup"

ooms talking together instead of going out and mixing with people. Although the girls claim to be equal with the men, they don't show this in practice. It's easier for a girl to get a job if she has a secondary education. There are many organizations to encourage women to learn—even evening education classes in the villages through which some people have been able to learn to read and write. The government is doing its best to encourage education in all sectors of the society."

Winfred Achant, another second-year student at the university, adds: "We have a lot of opportunities to indulge in extra-curricula activities. There are youth organizations such as the state Young Pioneers, and the YMCA, United Nations Student Association, Red Cross, Boy Scouts, cultural groups, and many others. In the university, most every subject has a group of people who get together to learn extra about that subject. I think our social life is not as boring as some people have been saying."

Supported by the government and the Christian Council, student volunteers have helped build low-cost housing (see page 8).

On Wednesday Mr. Ankarah took me on a tour of this large capital city, most of which is very modern. We went down by the docks; mostly Russian ships and trawlers were in the harbor. In Ghana, walking seems to be the most common means of travel, although you can ride the bus for eight cents or travel around downtown in a taxi for about 30 cents. Very few private individuals seem to have cars. And most of the cars you do see are Russian made. Except for Mobil gas and Coke, you don't see much evidence of American things. Although there are at least a dozen tribal dialects in Ghana, English is the major language of communication.

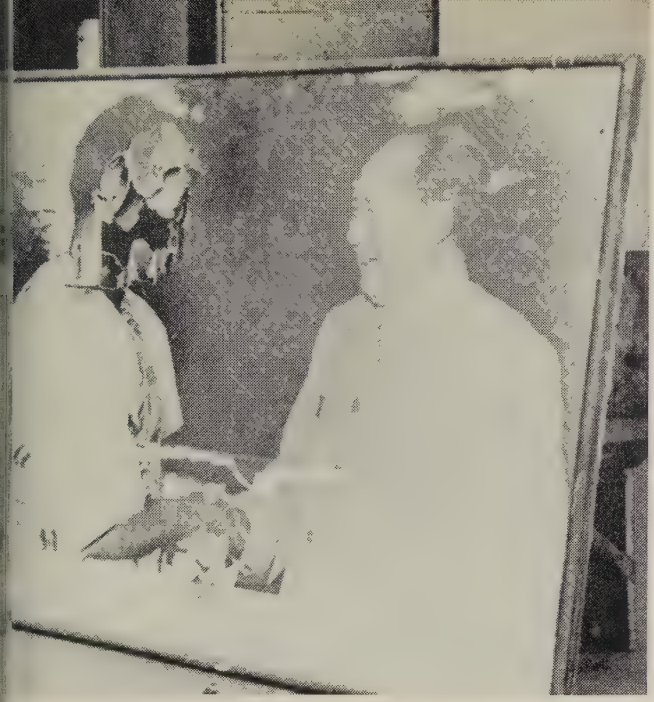
The hotel had a television set and everyone swarmed into the little room to watch when the one TV station in Ghana came on at five in the

Released fr

evening for telecasting until 11 p.m. The programs included news broad casts, talent-type shows, and Russian feature films. There was one on Tcha kovsky and another on ballet; they were Russian with English sub-title

That night some young man came to my hotel room and wanted me t take him to America. He wanted to go into radio and TV work and aske me if there was any way I knew that he could get to the United States– a scholarship or something. He wanted to study repair work and enginee ing. One of his friends was a waiter in the hotel and had told him there wa an American staying there. Of course, I couldn't help him.

Thursday morning was much like the other mornings I had spen in Ghana, except that this was to be my last morning here. Or so I though After breakfast, I strapped a few cameras around my neck and proceede to the business district of Accra to take photographs of the city from di ferent rooftops. When I was finished shooting, I returned to the hotel ar stopped at the office to ask for my bill. The desk clerk looked at me, su prised, and asked how I intended to get out of the country. I started



Photos by UPI

pression, happy people celebrated

ll him that Pan American has a flight every Thursday night to New York d I was scheduled to be on the flight tonight. Then I learned from the sk clerk that there has been a revolution in Ghana early that morning. ıe airport was closed. The desk clerk said that he doubted if I would get .t of the country for at least two weeks. He was very amused by the hole thing. At that point someone in the office turned on the radio and I ard a speaker representing the National Liberation Council telling the ople to remain calm and requesting all government officials to turn themlves over to the new authorities for their own self-protection. The broadst stressed that this had been a bloodless coup.

I immediately went to the U.S. embassy where the reports I had heard ere confirmed. They urged me not to risk bodily harm by taking photos. ıd Pan Am reported that they wouldn't know for several hours how long e airport would be closed. So, I went back to the hotel where Mr. Ankarah ıs waiting for me. He advised me to check out of the hotel and stay at s home until we could find out exactly what might be going to happen. ▶ , we went to his home.

He lives quite close to Flagstaff House—that's the Presidential palace

where all the fighting took place—and he said that around five a.m. he ha heard thumps and sounds like shells being fired. He thought that t army was just having maneuvers. But when this continued for an ho and he heard machine-gun noises, he dressed and went out. He walk down the road a bit and saw a friend who told him about the fighti Then, shortly after that he heard on the radio that a revolution had ov thrown the Nkrumah government.

Most of the people we met on the streets that day seemed pleased wi the whole thing. They told me of oppression under Nkrumah—especia economic oppression—and said that the taxes had just been raised a on Tuesday and that the country was on the verge of bankruptcy.

When we drove into Accra that afternoon to see about my flight, peop and police swarmed all over the streets. Armed police and soldiers sto in front of the post office and cable offices—it was virtually impossible get any communication out of the country. This worried me, for I wan my wife back home to know that I was safe, despite the news of revoluti

The Pan Am office was one of the few places open. They said the a port was definitely closed, but that they were trying to arrange a flight London. We should check the next day.

Leaving Accra, we ran into a gigantic crowd in the area near Black S Square—they were all carrying pieces of stone. It turned out that th were pieces of a large statue of Nkrumah which had stood near the squa A bulldozer had knocked it down, and the people were cutting it to piec All the people in the streets were extremely happy for what had happen And one soldier came by us and yelled into the car, "Are you happy?" replied, "Yes, we're very happy!"

That evening was a depressing one for me, since I had not been a

"I managed to be on the first pl

contact my wife. About 10 p.m. I heard a jet go over. I was fairly certain it was my Pan Am flight by-passing Accra and leaving me behind.

What would Friday bring? Around 7:30 a.m. we went to the Pan Am office again. They told me to be at the airport within an hour. Arrangements had been made with BOAC for a plane to take us to London. This would be the first group of people to leave Accra since the revolution. I packed a few things and we drove to the airport.

We had to park some distance away and walk to the terminal. There was a large group of people waiting—including a lot of Chinese. I learned that many persons—including Communist technicians—had been given 12 hours to leave the country. The customs' men were so harassed that they didn't even look in my bags—I had feared they might confiscate my film exposed in Ghana. But they just marked everything off. Then we waited about four hours before we all had clearance to leave. Then we were taken in a small bus to the airplane. One of the captains of the National Liberation Council rode in our bus and apologized for any delay we may have been caused. Once in the plane, we waited another half hour before final clearance was given. There were a lot of barrels and tanks all over the runways and airfield to prevent any unauthorized planes from landing. Soldiers could be seen everywhere guarding the field.

Soon we were in the air—including many happy Chinese and one happy American photographer. When we landed in London, I placed my first call home to my family in the U.S. A day later, I arrived in New York.

Although I didn't get the story I was sent to cover, I find it exciting working for YOUTH magazine. When they sent me on assignment to New York City last fall, I experienced the blackout of the Northeast. When YOUTH sent me to Ghana, I ended up in the midst of a revolution. I can't help but wonder what will happen next. ▼

...ving Ghana after the revolution"

"PUT 'ER AT HALF-MAST —OUR WIZARD'S BEEN INDICTED FOR CONTEMPT OF CONGRESS"
RACISM
MRS
RRRRFFF
RRFFF
RRF
ULBRICHT STANDS ON HIS HIND LEGS AND SPEAKS UP FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE U.N.
"CITIZENS O
GUINEA! I,
PRESIDENT,
YOU..."
NKRUMAH
GHANA
OU

IT'S A MAD,

Cartoon by John Fischetti in the *New York Herald Tribune*
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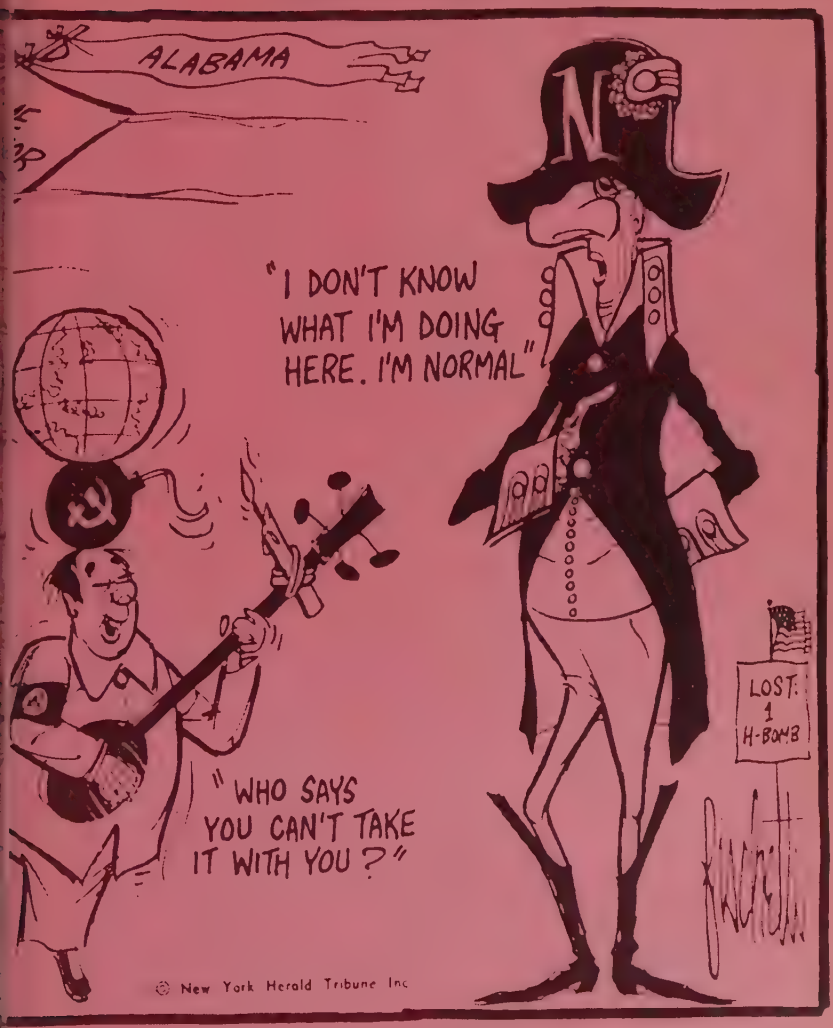


, MAD WORLD

i lie on my mat and pra

O Lord, we pray to you
for peace in this world.
The situation looks desperate,
but you see more than we do.
No one understands another any more.
Everyone knows best.
Everyone wants to force his half-baked ideas
upon other people.
They beat one another,
and they spit at one another,
and they set men,
your children,
against one another.
They build up armaments
and puff themselves up.
They pretend
to have war and peace in their hands.
Show these braggarts
who is Lord of the world,
that you alone can talk
of existence and freedom.
These people know nothing
of what they talk about.
Lord, we ask you
for peace in this world.
Your disobedient children
ask their loving Father for peace.
You are our hope and our peace.
Let your peace come into this world.
Amen.

This prayer was written by a young Ghanaian Christian and appears in the book of prayers, **I Lie on My Mat and Pray,** edited by Fritz Pawelzik, a YMCA fraternal secretary in Ghana. This prayer and the excerpt from another prayer (appearing on page 32) are reprinted by permission of Friendship Press. Copyright 1964.

Art by Georg Lemke, from "I Lie on My Mat and Pray" / Copyright 1964, Friendship Press

Art by Sister Mary Corita / Used by permission of the artist

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BEATLES . . .

BY RALPH MOORE / Who is going to have the last word about the Beatles? Certainly not this writer. And we don't expect everyone to have common tastes in music. I would like to suggest, however, that most Beatle-haters are not asking the right questions.

A terribly important concern is being overlooked when people casually tear the Beatles apart as though to do so were a respectable indoor sport. Branding the Beatles' music as a "communicable disease," "uncivilized cannibalism," and "rhythmic immorality." It is anyone's privilege to dislike the Beatles as a matter of personal taste. But, to make a federal case out of them with absolute and sweeping judgments (made with a pious nose in the air) is an unfortunately petty response for intelligent people to make.

What, then, are the unasked questions we ought to face?

A natural first question about the Beatles should be: *Is their music good in terms of acknowledged musical standards?* Some rather sophisticated musi

ties have been saying "Yes," in publications such as the New York *Times* l *Hi-fi–Stereo Review*. Not only are they talented in voice and on instrut, but some of their original compositions are of highest quality.

Some of their music is uniquely complex, difficult to learn for even excelt musicians. Full orchestras, including the Boston Pops, have performed sions of a few Beatles' hits. And in Minnesota, Mr. Russell Stanger, Assisnt Conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, in speaking to high hool classes about great music, has been introducing his sessions by playg selections from the Beatles on the piano. "Here's a four-bar phrase from Beatles song," he says. Then, continuing at the keyboard, he comments, ou can find the same thing in Brahms."

"Yesterday," for example, is in the tradition of western Europeans classical usic called Baroque. Behind Paul McCartney's singing are harmonies on ngs straight out of Bach. Even the verse of "Help!" is accompanied by a ditional form of contrapuntal melody. There is a deep musical richness these songs. Now witness: A big-selling album, "The Baroque Beatles."

In the last three years, *Time* reported recently, Beatle songwriters John non and Paul McCartney have written 88 songs that have been recorded 2,921 versions and have sold nearly 200 million copies. The songs sell t only because of the Beatles' golden name, but because "they are as illiantly original as any written today, respected and recorded by discrimting jazz groups like the Ramsey Lewis Trio and peerless vocalists like la Fitzgerald."

A second question might deal with lyrics . . . the content of the words. this point, the Beatles have their share of both excellent and inferior maial. "Yesterday" is surely as beautiful as any ballad ever written—the cry a young man who has quickly sobered up to some realities about life:

Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away,
Now it looks as though they're here to stay . . .

s insensitivity to the girl he loves has resulted in his losing her altogether, d he is forced to reflect not only on her reasons for leaving him, but also his own false illusions about himself and what love is. The pain of the oment is so intense that he would prefer some escape from facing up:

Yesterday, love was such an easy game to play,
Now I need a place to hide away,
Oh I believe in yesterday.

illiam Shakespeare would own these lyrics proudly, having poured out nilar ones in *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and other plays and sonnets.

A third question to be raised has to do with the popular influence of e Beatles—their appearance, personal style of life, movies—their whole nage. *Are they a creative expression of proper values?* This is a serious uestion, because it tends to cloud with emotionalism the first two questions hich are more artistic considerations.

Most often cited as objectionable in Beatlemania are: Irritating noise

(both in their percussive sound and in the shrieks of their audiences), dancing body movements, and indecent dress and hair style. On these grounds the "morality" of the Beatles is most frequently questioned.

It is fascinating to pursue these points. *Noise*, for instance, could be taken as a symbol of our day. Urban life (and we are all being urbanized no matter where we live) is literally shattered into fragments by human machines, loudspeakers, bells, crashes, applause, screams, explosions, guitars, and other deafening retorts. From the start, the world of today's youth has been one blasting-off after another. Like it or not, meaning and expression of values must take place in the heart of a clamorous, tumultuous environment. Rather than being immoral, noise is now symbolic of the terms under which man must find his way in life. Its morality rises or falls according to the way it builds or destroys life.

This brings us to the matter of *movement*. The beat, the sound of meaningful music, promotes active use of the most natural and healthy capacities of human beings. It is, in short, rightly to be called an act of celebration, whether we deal with people in 2000 B.C. or A.D. 1966. The Beatles are significantly central to the way so many youth see the world that this is precisely what has happened. In the midst of chaos, there is reason to rejoice, a story, to make a claim, to sing a joy, to dance a hope.

In *A Hard Day's Night* we see Paul, John, George, and Ringo wildly running around in an open field, jumping up and down, accompanied by their own music—a kind of outside free-for-all, yet a poetic ballet of youth today. That is a high point in celebration and a great event in movie-making, because it hails life as worthy of being tasted fully—life in the child-like, pleasurable sense, not life in the stiffened, routinized, deadened "adult" sense. A healthy freedom to act out a celebration with one's body is basic to the most creative kind of personality development. Psychiatry has been saying that for a long time. Actually, so has Christianity, but few have heard it ("Let the children come—of such is the kingdom of heaven!").

A rather sound morality is being explored in all of this—one that pierces through surfaces and tries to express essentials. The Beatles' *clothes* and *hair styles* serve to force the issue, to press the point that the crucial business for people today is the search for inner meanings in a world that functions according to shallow surface appearances—color, nationality, political party, class, name, belief, religion, school, etc.

"Take us for what we are, or not at all." This is being said to us as we see them walk our way. When their songs probe into love or sadness, happiness or hilarity, there is every reason to believe that they take these experiences much more seriously as life-and-death issues than many church people do. There is nothing "moral" about a building with a cross on it filled with people who earnestly strive to perpetuate their stuffy self-centeredness. Do the same voices who condemn the Beatles' tight pants and long hair for "immoral influences" also condemn the war in Viet Nam, or the preemptive war itself, or the all-white neighborhood closed to minority persons, or

mer-table-cocktail-hour gluttony of affluent America as immoral?

A fourth question about the Beatles should ask: *Do the Beatles have a sting place in the history of music?* It is often forgotten that rock 'n' roll an offshoot of jazz—and that jazz is the only unique contribution to the orld's music which America has ever made. Cal Rudman, a music hisian, has commented that today's popular music is a direct growth from the oul" music of early Negro-American experiences—the so-called rhythmd-blues and the spirituals. "Soul" music is just what the name implies: has to do with the wide range of tragic and comic fluctuations to which uman beings are subject. It rejoices or laments; curses and praises; laughs d cries. The Beatles, it is safe to say, are imbedded in the heart of the eat movement of "soul" music. Their commercial conquests and their mmicky promotions do not invalidate their positions in the "soul" of gnificant musical developments in the continually-shrinking world. We ed but to point to the latest Beatle album, a collection of haunting, somenes melancholy, always affirmative songs called "Rubber Soul."

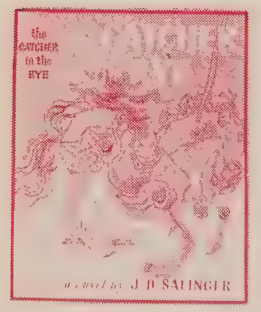
Sister Mary Corita, a Roman Catholic nun who is an artist of great ational distinction, obviously sees in the Beatles an expression of sponneous joy and profound freedom for the soul. "Love is here to stay, and at's enough," turns out to be an expression with double meaning for odern Christian youth who feel the pulse of this McCartney-Lennon hit d also know something about John 3:16. Sister Mary Corita's print nces with an uplifted heart and a dazzle of color, as though to proclaim: be Christian is to be happy!

Dr. Robert Baker, Dean of the School of Sacred Music at Union heological Seminary in New York, has urged for a long time that people the churches "get with" contemporary trends in secular music. Our ntury, he says, is the only one in the history of Christianity during which e church has utterly failed to listen to the music of its day. In every other eriod, musicians, composers and performers created the hymns and other orship music. There was always a demand for new modes of expression. ut, since 1900, Dr. Baker continues, we have closed the doors on new usic, so that not only do our services lack present-day musical relevance, ut our ears cannot even hear the fresh sounds of the world's music.

That may sound like a terribly stern judgment until we recognize how the eatles, among others, have been given "the treatment" by pious, reectable people in just the manner Dr. Baker describes. It remains for ose who do so either to justify their complaints along the lines of questions ch as those suggested above, or to enter with some patience into enjoyents in store for those whose ears become unclogged. Hopefully, this will appen before all adults have grown completely deaf and must cry out in esperation to the younger generation: *Help me get my feet back on the round. Won't you please, please help me?* ▼

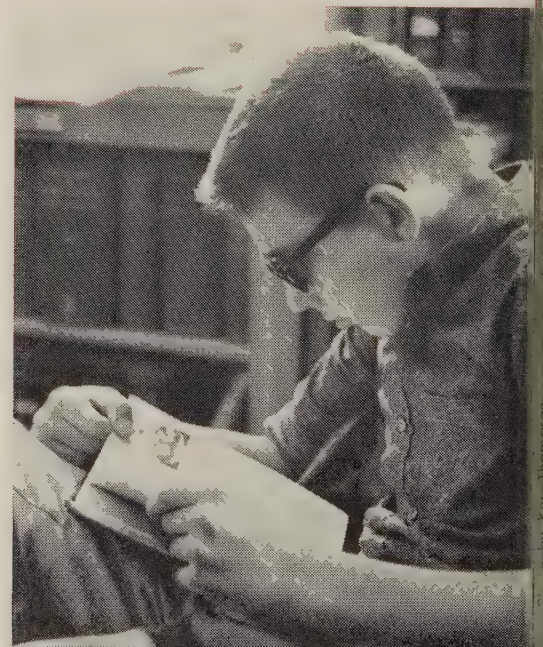
RALPH MOORE - Mr. Moore is a Program Secretary on the Youth Ministry Staff [illegible] Division of hristian Education of the United Church of Christ.

Photo by John



YOUTH FORUM /

THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL BO



What books are stirring up controversy in your community? Do you think people are getting unduly excited or are there good reasons why some persons are disturbed by certain books? Do different communities differ on whether or not a book is controversial? And how do they handle controversial books where you live—by banning the book, or by picketing the bookstore or by community censorship, or by posting "adults only," or by unlimited sales to *all* ages, or by open discussion in classrooms, or by depending on each family to decide individually? Do you welcome counsel on the value of a book? Do you read a book even though it is taboo? Do you feel yourself mature enough to handle the book in question? Or are you simply curious?

These are questions facing many teens and many towns.

Controversy is the growing edge of life in our world. Wherever you find controversy, there you will find a situation in which the parties involved have a lot of growing to do. And how we handle controversy will determine how fast and how firm we mature—whether it be as a family, or as a community, or as a world.

READ . . . What are you reading that's controversial? Several hundreds of YOUTH's readers responded to the question: "What's the most controversial book you've read?" Here are samples of their answers. The books are listed in the order in which they were most frequently mentioned.

The Catcher in the Rye

I felt sorry for the boy and shed several tears for him. The librarians wouldn't allow me to check the book out, so I bought it. My parents took it away from me, but gave it back. *—Lu Ann Smith/Virden, Ill./17*

I thought it was great, even though the morals and language were not very good. The author had a purpose. *—Dawn Ressler/Reading, Pa./16*

I like it because, looking beyond the four-letter words and ugliness, the main character, though unstable, was a sensitive, responsive person—no different from any other human being. *—Judy Powell/Naugatuck, Conn./17*

It was required reading. Having lived in a prep school world, I found many of the points to be true, especially Holden's obsession with the phoniness of his world. The book is controversial in its use of language, also representative of the prep school situation. I found it portrayed an exaggerated world very well.

—Trowby Hunt/Saratoga Springs, N.Y./18

It made me laugh at myself, my generation, and soci
—Richard Newman/Lidkoping, Sweden,

Salinger hits at the real hot spots of life—not war or
population explosion, but individual people struggling i
mixed-up world. *—Randy Gates/Redfield, S.D.*

Black Like Me

I liked the book, but I didn't like what I read.
feel terrible when you realize how Negroes are re
treated. *—Rose Marie Ullom/Wiley, Colo.*

It troubled me. I couldn't stay away from it altho
I would get worked up inside because of people who a
equal in God's eyes hating each other. I would put
book aside and just think about what was being said, th
later I could proceed. It's very good!
—Rachel Smith/Minden, Iowa/

It was a real eye-opener. It reminds me of an ala
clock—some people hear it, wake up a little, but refus
accept it and go back to sleep. Others wake up, reali
what they must do, but are reluctant so turn it off and
there. Still others wake up, jump out of bed witho
thinking of alternatives, and start their work.
—Terri Kruse/Bryant, S.D./

I thought it was over-rated, it offered nothing as a so
tion to the racial problem.
—Nancy Eberhard/Whitewater, Kansas/

1984

It portrays a very horrible yet probable future that
might have to face and it should be included on the rea
ing list of every young person approaching voting age.
—Sandy Schultz/Hamburg, N.Y./

It is a most frightening and terrifying book, because
possibilities are all too close.
—Barbara Quimby/ Wolfeboro Falls, N.H./

I am no longer frightened by *1984* since I do not th
we will allow ourselves to become a totalitarian state.
—Andrea Bremer/Norwood, Mass./

Brave New World

After reading a series of *Life* articles about test tu
reproduction, the book sounded like such a possibili
It's frightening.
—Susan MacLeod/Billings, Mont./

It was a book that seems more real and believable eve
day. *—Cynthia Koogler/Mt. Sidney, Va./*

Candy

It was the most disgusting book I ever read. I read

because it was controversial. I agree with the critics. It should be burned. —*Karen Wright/Cambridge, Md./17*

It was an excellent satire, although the reader must keep this fact in mind while he's reading the book.

—*Karen Klinke/Skokie, Ill./16*

I had mixed feelings about it. There were points where it was a very good book with something to say and at other points, I felt it was simply a smutty book.

—*Jerry Baxter/Dayton, Ohio/19*

Honest to God

It gave me new insight into my religion—Of course, I could not agree with some of the things that were stated.

—*Nancy Stover/Waynesboro, Pa./17*

I am sure there is many a Christian youth who feels that theologians are avoiding the real issues of our day. In the past Christianity has shaped society; today society is shaping it, and Bishop Robinson is a part of this movement.

—*Bruce Privratsky/Dickinson, N.D./17*

To Kill a Mockingbird

It brings up the old question—'Are all men created equal.' —*Sue Metylee/Nappanee, Ind./16*

It was subtle, yet astoundingly direct in dealing with the racial problem. I thought it was great.

—*Kaye Foster/ Roanoke, Va./16*

The Bible

It contradicts itself in many places. Some happenings seem unbelievable. —*Glen Kaas/West Haven, Conn./17*

Peyton Place

I think it is just the first time people ever read about those kind of happenings instead of gossiping about them.

—*Janie Pagel/Brillion, Wis./19*

Grapes of Wrath

It showed me how tough life can be, and was. Makes a guy stop to think and count his blessings.

—*Gordon Hoffut/Des Moines, Iowa/17*

Lady Chatterly's Lover

I think that either it was too sensual or I was too young to be reading it. —*Mike Burns/Asheboro, N.C./17*

Other books receiving more than one mention were: *Another Country, Atlas Shrugged, Fanny Hill, The Fountainhead, The Group, Hawaii, The Last Temptation of Christ, Lord of the Flies, The Man, None Dare Call It Treason, The Scarlet Letter, The Silent Spring, The Status Seekers,* and *The Ugly Americans.* ▼

A Patch of Blue

BY LAURA-JEAN MASHRICK / Give Hollywood the situation of a blind girl, a drunken grandfather, a prostitute mother, and a kind stranger, and you might well expect a sickly-sweet sentimental result.

These are the basic ingredients of "A Patch of Blue," MGM's recent movie release starring Sidney Poitier, Shelley Winters, Elizabeth Hartman, and Wallace Ford. It is a Cinderella-type story in which blind Selina (Elizabeth Hartman) washes, cooks, scrubs, and earns a living by stringing beads—day in and day out. Her "wicked" mother keeps Selina from almost all contact with the outside world, tells her she is ugly, and even begrudges her going to the nearby park: "Who's going to bring you home?" and "I want my supper on time when I get home from work!"

Sidney Poitier, as Gordon Ralfe, doubles as prince-charming and fairy god-mother as he befriends Selina after meeting her in the park, opens new worlds to her (everything from pineapple juice to the telephone), and provides an escape from her dreary existence through enrollment in a school for the blind.

The characters, especially the minor ones, also fit this stock situation in the way that they are developed (or rather, *not* developed). Shelley Winters has been nominated for an Academy Award for her portrayal of Selina's prostitute mother. Yet, while Miss Winter's acting is convincing, the character she plays (Rose-Ann) and the character of Old Pa are both shallowly drawn. One never sees more than the one side of either of them: They are simply self-centered—Rose-Ann concerned only with an easier life, and Old Pa with escape, through alcohol, from this one.

o the bleak life of a blind girl came a young
n who opened for her the new worlds of pine-
ple juice and telephones and a nearby park.

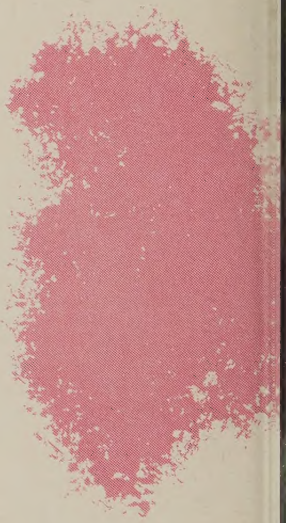
otos courtesy of MGM

Selina and Gordon are also fairly simple characters, though they are developed a bit more. (Miss Hartman has also been nominated for an Academy Award.) Selina presents a picture of general acceptance of her dreary and helpless state—she is naive to the good in the world and tolerant of the sordidness which surrounds her. Gordon is a kind and gentle man who is also naive—though in the opposite way—he cannot believe that a situation such as Selina's can really exist in a 20th century metropolis. In other words, Rose-Ann and Old Pa are stock villains with few redeeming traits, and Selina and Gordon are stock heros with no evil thoughts or intentions.

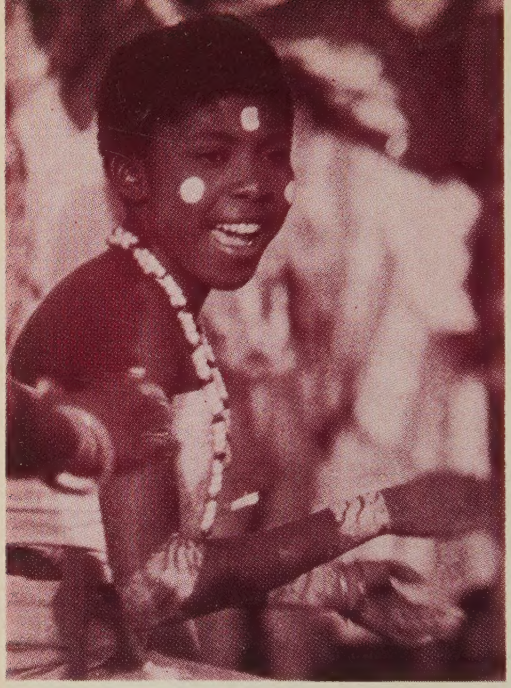
If this is true, then why should one bother to see this film?

The answer is that beyond this simple story the film tells of the relationship which develops between the white girl and her Negro friend—a relationship of love and concern as they meet each other as individuals. The message is not just that race is unimportant and an unreal barrier between individuals, though this is part of it. It is the genuine love and concern of two individuals for each other—which breaks down all barriers—that makes this film worthwhile. Through love, Selina sees the worth and goodness of Gordon to which many sighted persons are blinded since they can only see his color. Through love, Gordon sees the basic worth and beauty of Selina to which even her mother is blinded because of Selina's handicap.

This basic understanding of love and concern is shown at its best in the film's ending, Selina and Gordon's "goodby" is simple, poignant, and beautiful. ▼



Both Shelley Winters and Elizabeth Hartman we nominated for Academy Awards for their roles s the prostitute mother and the blind daught Sidney Poitier and Wallace Ford portray Gorc and Old Pa.



. . . Lord, here are your people.
We want to have a happy day
together,
if you are willing.
We know
that other men are in need and misery
or facing their death.
We pray for them.
You are the master of joy.
Be there with your comfort.
And now, please come to us too,
so that we may really rejoice.
O, come,
merciful, loving, friendly God.
We want now to sing and drum
and be joyful.
In your name we begin.
Amen.

—A prayer by a young African, from "I Lie on My Mat and Pray." Copyright 1964. Friendship Press.